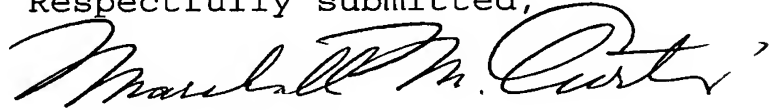


Therefore, early and favorable action on the merits of claims 1 - 15 is respectfully requested.

If an extension of time is required for this response to be considered as being timely filed, a conditional petition is hereby made for such extension of time. Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Deposit Account No. 09-0458 of International Business Machines Corporation (E. Fishkill).

Respectfully submitted,



Marshall M. Curtis  
Reg. No. 33,138

Whitham, Curtis & Christofferson, P. C.  
11491 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 340  
Reston, Virginia 20190

(703) 787-9400  
Customer Number: 30743